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GROUNDBREAKING FOR ARMORY

The South Dakota Army National Guard broke ground Wednesday, Aug. 23, on a new \$25 million Watertown Readiness Center, which will enhance training and readiness for National Guard forces for years to come.

The 80,000 square foot readiness center is located on 30 acres of land, about one mile from the current National Guard armory, and will feature classrooms, administrative space, military vehicle parking, equipment storage and an auditorium.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Sen. Tim Johnson, Rep. Kristi Noem, as well as senior SDNG officials and local government and business leaders were on hand for the ceremony.

The new readiness center will replace Watertown's ageing National Guard armory, which has been in existence since 1958.

The Watertown Readiness Center has been given high priority in keeping with South Dakota's plan to replace older, inadequate armories and sites, which will save in operating costs and provide areas for training to meet readiness objectives for state active-duty missions and overseas deployments.

In addition to providing better training and readiness capabilities for Soldiers, the state-of-the art facility is also designed to meet LEED Silver criteria – making the building energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

The readiness center will also include a geothermal heat exchanger for heating and cooling, automated temperature control monitor, anti-terrorism/force protection measures, security fencing and site lighting, to name a few.

The readiness center is expected to be complete in the spring of 2013.

"This great nation will continue to rely on the National Guard long after we pull out of Iraq and Afghanistan, and facilities such as the one that will be built on this site will help to ensure that the South Dakota National Guard will always be ready when needed either at home or abroad," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general for the SDNG.



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SD VETERANS' CEMETERY SUPPORT COUNCIL MEETS

The South Dakota Veterans' Cemeteries Support Council met Wednesday, August 17, in Rapid City.

The Council's focus is to remember veterans and their sacrifices by promoting veterans cemeteries, memorials and ceremonies.

The Council is comprised of representation from the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the American Legion Riders, Benevolent Protective Order of Elks, DAV, DAV Auxiliary, DOES, Knights of Columbus, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, South Dakota Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite Masons, South Dakota County/Tribal Veterans Service Officers Association, South Dakota Funeral Directors Association, South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, TREA, TREA Auxiliary, VFW and VFW Auxiliary.

The Council has numerous standing committees that address such issues as: education, beautification, memorials, ceremonies, patriotism and honor guards.

Neal Lutke, Pennington County VSO, was elected as treasurer/finance officer for 2011-2012 and Jerry Lolley, Meade County VSO, was elected trustee and chaplain.

Paul Gremse, field officer, with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, represents the department on the Council.



NE CHAPTER OF VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA MEET

The Northeast Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America met in Watertown Thursday evening, August 18.

Steve Oliva, field officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, made a presentation on veteran's benefits and provided an overview of the disabilities related to Agent Orange. He also assisted veterans in filing their claims. Bruce Howell, Marshall County Veterans Service Officer, also attended the meeting of over 50 participants.

South Dakota Vietnam Veterans hats were donated to the group for a raffle fundraiser which garnered over \$150.

Vietnam Veterans of America is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."



HAGGERTY NAMED DIRECTOR OF BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY

Mr. William T. Haggerty, Jr. was named Director of Black Hills National Cemetery on July 3, 2011.

As director he is responsible for all burial, maintenance and administrative operations at the cemetery as well as at Fort Meade National Cemetery in Sturgis and Hot Springs National Cemetery in Hot Springs.

Prior to accepting this position, Mr. Haggerty was the director of the Fort Smith National Cemetery in Arkansas from November, 2010. In April 2009, Mr. Haggerty graduated from the comprehensive year-long Cemetery Director Intern Program at the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) National Training Center in St. Louis, Mo. He then spent six months assisting the director at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis awaiting his assignment to Fort Smith National Cemetery.

Prior to joining the National Cemetery Administration, Mr. Haggerty spent five years with the American Battle Monuments Commission, where he served as Assistant Superintendent at the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten, the Netherlands. In this position he became proficient in all aspects of operating an overseas military cemetery including horticulture, facility management, maintenance, public affairs and administration.

Before entering the federal service, Mr. Haggerty spent 22 years in the telecommunications industry, primarily in training and development positions. He served as training manager, professional development program manager and instructor/developer. He also worked as an independent business consultant.

Mr. Haggerty served in the US Army's Berlin Brigade from 1972-1974.




RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY

Retiree Appreciation Day will be held at Ellsworth Air Force Base on Friday, September 16, 2011, for all military retirees regardless of branch of service. The lunch will be held from 11 am to 1 pm at the Dakota's Club. Meal prices are \$8 for club member and \$10 for non-members. The guest speaker will be Col. Steven Hiss, 28th Bomb Wing vice commander.

For more information, contact (605) 385-3600 or email 28bwrao@ellsworth.af.mil.

The Air Force has created a Web site for its retiree community. The site is full of news and information and is easy for users to access and navigate through. To visit this new website, go to www.retirees.af.mil.



Retiree News

No changes to military retirement anytime soon

VA embracing social media tools

VA outlines October changes in Post-9/11 GI Bill

► More News

Hot Topic

New e-Afterburner posted
The March 2011 edition of the e-Afterburner has been posted. Just click on "Afterburner" on the navigation bar above. This edition is available in both .doc and .pdf formats for downloading and printing.

Official Site of the U.S. Air Force Video



Reinvesting in Airmen
08/18/2011 - The completion of a new Child Development Center, at Moody AFB proved Airmen and their families are the Air Force's top priority.

AF Headlines

Air Force Week in Photos

RED HORSE team rides in for Ulchi Freedom Guardian

Hawaii joint base trains for emergency preparedness

S. Korea, U.S. begins major exercise

Yokota Airmen take to sky during Pacific Airlift Rally

Officials train a resilient family, force

Officials offer peek into officer promotion boards

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VSO CONGRESSIONAL FORUM

Veterans Service Officers in western South Dakota had the opportunity to meet with staffers from South Dakota's congressional delegation Friday noon.

Issues discussed were inconsistencies with hearing loss claims, the new cemetery proposed for South Dakota, pension, and travel pay for veterans receiving medical treatment. Paul Gremse, field officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs also participated in the forum.



OUTREACH EVENTS

More than 30 South Dakota veterans attended the Veterans Stand Down on Friday, August 19, in Fort Thompson.

The Stand Down continues a tradition of bringing together state, federal and private agencies in a free service fair for veterans in need of assistance. The Stand Down is a grassroots, community-based intervention program designed to assist soldiers and veterans combat life. Medical, legal, disability, education and pension were some of the topics discussed with the veterans.

CTVSOs Ron and Nancy Falor participated in the Stand Down, as did Steve Oliva, field officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SD DVA).

Kevin Bowen, SD DVA field officer, participated in Frontier Days at White River Friday, August 19.

Bowen and Gary Sletto, County Veterans Service Officer for Jones and Mellette Counties, greeted veterans and assisted them with questions regarding benefits and programs.



HEROES WITHIN OUR SMALL SOUTH DAKOTA COMMUNITIES



Every small town community has a hero that unknown to all of us supports our veterans, our military personnel and their families.

One of those heroes is "Mark's Old School Barber and Style Shop" located on Hudson Street in Spearfish.

Mark's Barber Shop, is offering free haircuts to members of the 842nd Engineering Company before their deployment in September.

Daily, they offer a regular discount of eight dollars for soldiers and firefighters. But the father and son owned shop wanted to give back even more to those who fight for our country everyday.

Our thanks to yet another South Dakota Hero!

SD GUARD OFFICER CANDIDATES EARN COMMISSION

Fifteen South Dakota Army National Guard members graduated from Officer Candidate School (OCS), Class 55, and pinned on the rank of second lieutenant during a commissioning ceremony Saturday, Aug. 20, at the Sturgis Community Center. The candidates recently completed the OCS program requirements for the 196th Regiment, Regional Training Institute (RTI) at Fort Meade. OCS is the first step in the Army's basic officer development program which trains Soldiers to receive a commission as an Army second lieutenant.



Officer candidates train for many hours on basic military tasks including physical training, drill and ceremony and troop leading procedures. During the training, the candidates are placed in high-stress, high-intensity environments and challenged to make leadership decisions.

The 196th RTI's OCS program is composed of three-phases, with 'traditional' and 'fast track' course options. Today's ceremony was preceded by two weeks of Phase III training. Twelve of the candidates completed the traditional 14-month course while the other three completed the eight-week fast track course.

The newly commissioned lieutenants will be assigned to units across the state as future leaders in the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Several presentations were made throughout the ceremony to include:

- The Battalion Leadership award was presented to the 153rd Engineer Battalion for the greatest number of students graduating from Officer Candidate School.
- Officer Candidate Christopher A. Olson, of Rapid City, earned the Army Physical Fitness Award for scoring the highest on the Army Physical Fitness Test.
- Officer Candidate Paul M. Giovanetti, of Pierre, earned the Endeavor Award for demonstrating the highest degree of consistent advancement, perseverance and devotion to duty during the training year.
- Officer Candidate John M. Schloss, of Yankton, earned the Academic Excellence Award by attaining the highest academic rating for the school year.
- Officer Candidate Derek Booker, of Custer, earned the Leadership Excellence Award for attaining the highest leadership evaluations during the training year.
- Officer Candidate Christopher A. Olson, of Rapid City, earned the Erickson Trophy/Honor Graduate award for graduating with the highest honor point total. Honor points are awarded in the following categories: APFT score, academic scores and leadership evaluations. It is given by the authority of the Department of the Army and the Air Force, National Guard Bureau, and is named in memory of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau at the time the award was initiated, Major General Edgar Erickson.

Graduating Officer Candidates:

2nd Lt. Joel L. Bartscher - Mitchell
 2nd Lt. Richard A. Bauman - Pierre
 2nd Lt. Terry A. Berndt - Rapid City
 2nd Lt. Derek C. Booker - Custer
 2nd Lt. Chad J. Carlson - Rapid City
 2nd Lt. Paul M. Giovanetti - Pierre
 2nd Lt. Jeffrey J. Hauck - Watertown
 2nd Lt. James M. McDonald - Kyle
 2nd Lt. Christopher A. Olson - Rapid City
 2nd Lt. Travis L. Peterson - Watertown
 2nd Lt. Brian M. Schaff - Belle Fourche
 2nd Lt. John M. Schloss - Yankton
 2nd Lt. Phillip D. Thompson - Brookings
 2nd Lt. Travis D. Tipton - Pierre
 2nd Lt. Ryan L. Williamson - Rapid City

SD GUARD SHOWS APPRECIATION FOR EMPLOYERS

This week, the South Dakota National Guard traveled to the communities of Brookings, Sioux Falls and Mitchell to show their appreciation for employers of Guard members.

Employers are an important component to the Guard, as they allow Guard members the time off they need for annual training, state active duty missions or deployments overseas.

These appreciation events were also a great opportunity to recognize employers for giving Guard members time off to help with South Dakota's flood relief efforts.



UPCOMING EVENTS

August 29-31— VSO Annual Benefits School—Pierre Ramkota Hotel

September 1—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair—Free Admission for Veterans

September 10—451st Firefighters Activation Ceremony

September 11—Patriot Day

September 13—Stand Down— Rapid City

September 16—Stand Down - Watertown

September 16—Retiree Appreciation Day/Luncheon—EAFB

September 20—Stand Down—Aberdeen

September 21—842nd Engineering Company Activation Ceremony

September 21—Stand Down—McLaughlin

September 22—Stand Down—Eagle Butte

September 23—Stand Down—Sioux Falls

October 14-16—VABHHCS Women's Retreat

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